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~ WinXP, Life After Death ~ Bring The World Online! ~ Getting Hack-proof!
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->From the Editor’s Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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Typically, a long holiday weekend is followed by a "shortened" work week, for everybody! Well, we just celebrated Labor Day here in the States; and, it’s also the unofficial end of the summer. Makes some sense, as students return to school at around this time also.

Well, you’d never know that the summer was "over" with the weather that we’ve been having here! 90-degree temperatures have returned, and the humidity levels have sky-rocketed! Hopefully, things will get back down to where I enjoy them, by the beginning of next week.

Until then, try to stay cool, and enjoy this week’s issue!

Until next time...

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->In This Week’s Gaming Section - Vintage Gamer Sets Enduro Robotron 2084 Record!
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""" Celebrating End of Oakland s Bizarre 80-Year Pinball Ban!

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->A-ONE Gaming Online - Online Users Growl & Purr!
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Vintage Gamer Sets Enduro Robotron 2084 Record

With a 5-o clock shadow, heavy from neglect, along with a pair of tired eyes and sore wrists, David Gomez emerged victorious against friend and foe Robotron 2084.

Gomez, 44, an information technology professional by trade, spent last weekend at The Game Preserve, an arcade near Oak Ridge North, in a man-versus-machine marathon which lasted 28 hours, 53 minutes and 51 seconds.

Furthermore, Gomez did it all with one credit.

The initial challenge, known as the Robotron 2084 Gauntlet   Race to 100 Million, according to the Robotron 2084 Guidebook online, is an enduro challenge requiring players to race to 100 million points within a 24-hour window using only one credit.

Gomez is one of only a handful of vintage gaming enthusiasts in the world to achieve the feat and now sits at the top of Robotron 2084 Guidebook s online leaderboard. It was his fourth attempt since December 2013.

At the 24-hour mark, he nabbed a total of 106,315,450 points. However, with a second wind at his back, Gomez decided to hoof it another five hours, netting a grand total of 125,010,125 points   25 million more than the next ranked contender, Ken House.

 It was never about bragging rights. It was more so   I wonder how far I can go, Gomez said. I wanted to satisfy my own curiosity. I wanted to see what would give out first, me or the machine.

While, in the end, the machine may have outlasted the man, Gomez was quite content with his final results. His wife, Nanette, and two children, Nathan, 13, and Lyssa, 11, who were all present during David s vector-blasting marathon, are also very proud.

 It is more than just a video game, Nanette said. This is a personal accomplishment. It shows me that he can do whatever he sets out to do, no matter what it is, and he is setting the right example for our kids that there are no boundaries.

Rusty Key, one of the owners of The Game Preserve, called David a Robotron master.

 It is quite an accomplishment. We are very proud of what David did, Key said. The whole 24 hours, he was just a machine, so focused on what he was trying to do. But he also had his backup team with his family. It very much was a family effort, and that is really one of the things we are all about at The Game Preserve.

Huge Tournament Celebrates End of Oakland s Bizarre 80-Year Pinball Ban

Can you believe there was a time when the game of pinball was illegal in this town?

Can you believe that time was this year?

Residents of this Bay Area city probably couldn t possibly imagine they were breaking the law every time they sidled up to a Bally table and played the silver ball. But it was only last month that the Oakland city council finally passed a measure lifting an 80-year ban on the public operation of pinball machines. To celebrate this occasion, a local

RadioShack is holding a month-long pinball tournament. The chain, a key resource for pinball owners, has purchased and installed an Iron Man machine in the store in the city s Fruitvale Station, and invited players to test their skills. Anyone who tops 50 million points will be invited back to compete for the grand prize the table itself.

Oakland s absurd ban dates to the 1930’s, when the machines were considered a form of gambling. Before the addition of flippers, which allowed the player to bounce the ball and more accurately affect the game s outcome, pinball machines simply rolled the ball down the playfield. The only way of controlling the outcome was to imprecisely nudge the table. This was not particularly effective, making pinball largely a game of chance. You might get a payout for achieving a high score.

There was this stigma for what pinball was, said Josh Sharpe, president of the International Flipper Pinball Association, which stuck around as it evolved into an amusement machine, with electricity and the opportunity to control the ball via flippers.

Roger Sharpe, the Association s co-founder and Josh s father, was a driving force behind destigmatizing pinball in the 1970s. In 1976, the elder Sharpe appeared before the New York city council to demonstrate that pinball as practiced was a game of skill, not chance. His testimony (and supple wrist) helped reverse New York s ban on pinball. But the bans, like other ridiculous or outdated laws, remained on the books in other cities across America, including Oakland.

That said, the law went largely unenforced and it wasn t until an Association tournament was shut down that the organization knew it must fight to see the statute reversed.

It might have even been about the noise of the business, just based on the machines and the people there, Sharpe said of the complaint that led to the enforcement of the anti-pinball law. If you want to shut someone down, find a way to make what they re doing illegal. So they found this old rule that didn t allow people to operate pinball machines that way.

Instead of backing down, the group fought the law as many other communities have done over the last 40 years. The result was Oakland lifting its pinball ban, as a part of a larger measure looking at modern gambling establishments in the Bay Area city.

We ve had a really big pinball renaissance and resurgence in the past five years, said Jody Dankberg, director of marketing for Stern, the only company in America currently manufacturing pinball machines.

We re seeing a huge growth in location pinball, a huge growth in league play, tournaments, and things like that, Dankberg said. Organizations like the IFPA, these competitive players, they ve really been the driving force behind getting some of these bans lifted.

Pinball bans still exist, like in Oakland s neighboring city Alameda the location of the Pacific Pinball Museum, which had to remove all the coin slots off of its machines to comply with the law. But pinball can finally emerge from out of the shadows in Oakland.

It opens the door for so many more cool things, Dankberg said. Across the country we re seeing a huge trend in the barcade business: bars that

sell craft beer and have classic videogames and pinball machines.

With a law on the books, like it was in Oakland, it prevents that type of venue. So now this is pretty exciting hopefully we ll see more pinball in Oakland.

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Apple To Tighten Online Security After Recent Hack

Apple plans to tighten its online security measures to reduce the chances of its users being victimized by intrusions like the ones that stole nude photos from actress Jennifer Lawrence and other celebrities.

CEO Tim Cook told The Wall Street Journal in a story published Friday that Apple Inc. will use email and push notifications to alert the hundreds of millions of people using its services when there has been an attempt to restore their iCloud data on a new device, change an account password or log on to an account with a new device. Previously there were no notifications for restoring iCloud data, but users did receive an email when someone tried to change a password or log in for the first time from a new device.

Apple expects to start sending the additional notifications in two weeks. The iPhone maker said the new security will allow users to change passwords to reclaim control of an account or notify Apple's security team about a potential problem.

An Apple spokesman confirmed the report Friday but declined to comment further than what was said in the interview.

Apple is also urging users to ensure they have complex passwords that are difficult to guess and are enabling a feature known as two-factor authentication that requires a numeric code sent to a phone to gain access to an account.

The security clampdown comes just a few days after Apple acknowledged computer hackers broke into the accounts of Lawrence and several other stars whose revealing photos were posted online during the Labor Day weekend. The Cupertino, California, company blamed the security breakdown on the intruders' ability to figure out passwords and bypass other safeguards.

The embarrassing episode raised doubts about Apple's online security at a time when the company is preparing to introduce several services that will seek to vacuum up even more information about people's lives and finances. When Apple unveils its next iPhone at a Tuesday event in Silicon Valley, Cook also is widely expected to provide more details about previously announced services designed to help people manage their

health and home appliances. Analysts also believe Apple will include a digital wallet for making payments on the iPhone and, possibly, a long-awaited smartwatch, too.

As part of its efforts to reassure users, Apple has emphasized that it found no evidence of a widespread problem in iCloud or its Find my iPhone service.

Instead, the affected celebrity accounts were targeted by hackers who had enough information to know the usernames, passwords and answers to personal security questions designed to thwart unauthorized entries, according to Apple.

Knowing this crucial information would enable an outsider to break into Apple accounts, including iCloud, and many other types of online accounts. The digital burglaries, though, probably would have been thwarted with two-factor authentication.

Facebook Debuts A Privacy Checkup Tool To Help You Better Control Your Data

On Thursday, Facebook released a new tool to help you understand and control your privacy settings on the site.

First announced back in April, the Privacy Checkup tool lets you see and adjust who can view your data, as well as which apps can access it. It is navigated, curiously, with the help of a nameless blue dinosaur let s call him Clippyosaurus who pops up now and then and reminds you to review your privacy settings to make sure they re set up the way you want.

Per the company s blog post:

 Today, we re starting to roll out Privacy Checkup, which helps you review and control who you re sharing with.

 We know you come to Facebook to connect with friends, not with us. But we also know how important it is to be in control of what you share and who you share with.

The release is likely a move for Facebook to improve its public image, which has been marred by several privacy scandals in the past several years.

The Privacy Checkup tool attempts to both simplify the process of changing your sharing settings and demystify whom you re sharing with.

The tool isn t a cure-all. While it might help you better understand what you re sharing and with whom, for example, it doesn t change the fact that Facebook farms out your detailed personal data to advertisers for profit by default.

Anyway, below is a quick run-through of how the tool works:

When you access your privacy settings via the lock symbol in the upper-right corner of Facebook s navigation bar, your (Mac-using?) dinosaur friend will appear and be like, Hey, privacy, blah blah blah.

After you click Privacy Checkup, a box will pop up on your screen. Via this tool, you can monitor Your Posts, Your Apps, and Your Profile.

The first page is a basic run-through of who can see the updates you write on your page.

The second is a survey of which apps are connected to your Facebook. I ll admit it s nice to have quick access to this, as I often try out an app once or twice and then forget about it. With this tool, I can remove its access to my data with one click. You can also adjust who sees your activity on the app.

Finally, you re shown all the basic personal info on your profile and given the choice to adjust what it says and who sees it.

That s all it does! At the very least, this simplifies the convoluted process of adjusting your privacy that s caused so many problems in the past.

TwitPic Is Shutting Down, Blames Twitter

TwitPic, a photo sharing website closely linked to Twitter, will be shutting down on September 25, 2014.

The service was launched in 2008 and is most known for the platform used to tweet out a photo of US Airways Flight 1549 that Capt. Chesley Sully Sullenberger crash landed in the Hudson River.

TwitPic founder, Noah Everett, stated in a blog post that they will have a feature to allow users to export all of their photos and videos in the coming days.

Everett claims that a trademark dispute with Twitter is forcing them to shut down TwitPic. He states that A few weeks ago Twitter contacted our legal demanding that we abandon our trademark application or risk losing access to their API.

The Twitter application programming interface (API) is what TwitPic uses to connect its services to Twitter.

Below is a statement from a Twitter spokesperson sent to @CNBC on TwitPic: We re sad to see Twitpic is shutting down. We encourage developers to build on top of the Twitter service, as Twitpic has done for years, and we made it clear that they could operate using the Twitpic name. Of course, we also have to protect our brand, and that includes trademarks tied to the brand.

Facebook Goes Down for Some U.S. Users

Facebook Inc went down briefly for an unknown number of U.S. users on Wednesday afternoon in what appeared to be the latest outage to affect the world’s largest social network.

Several users had earlier reported getting an error message, "unable to

connect to the Internet" when attempting to sign in.

Facebook said the log-in problems arose after what it called an infrastructure-configuration adjustment.

We immediately discovered the issue and fixed it, and everyone should now be able to connect," a Facebook spokesman said.

Three Essential Steps To Make Yourself More Hack-Proof

Look, there s no hiding from being hacked. Everything is vulnerable, and if you haven t been personally affected by a data breach yet, you will. But while you can t ever protect yourself 100 percent from malicious data theft, you can at least put a better lock on your door than the one your neighbor has. These three simple tips will go a long way toward helping you avoid having a hacker rifling through your files.

1. Don t Reuse Passwords

If they get you, this is how you ll get got. Password reuse is a huge problem. That s because when one service has a breach (say, LinkedIn or Adobe), people rush to try the exposed passwords on other sites especially email, social media, and banking. If you use the same password multiple places, it makes you only as secure as the most vulnerable target. The same thing goes for your clever password schemes, too. If a human being can t figure out the slight variations you ve set up to track your Gmail, Facebook, and Wells Fargo passwords, a machine will.

2. Set Up Two-Factor Authentication

Look, I know two-factor authentication sounds a little scary. It even sounds a little scary when you call it two-step authentication. I know. But basically, it just means that when someone tries to log into an account from a new location (a different computer, a different phone, whatever) they also have to enter a code that s sent to a trusted device. This usually means that you ll get some sort of text message with a six-digit number you have to enter if you want to, say, log into Facebook from a computer in the library (bad idea!) or reset the password on your Google account. The thing you should know about two-factor is that once you have it set up, which is typically an easy process, you ll rarely have to actually use it. It s mostly a set it and forget it operation.

If your bank, or email provider, or online data storage provider doesn t offer two factor, find a different one that does.

3. Use a Password Manager

A good password manager will help you create and manage strong passwords that you can use to log in from the Web or your mobile device. All you ll ever need to know is the master password. The rest of your passwords are encrypted, and can only be unlocked by that master password. You can use a password manager to both generate and track new passwords, and to perform a password audit of your existing ones. Dashlane, 1Password and LastPass are all great options.

You ve been warned.

Facebook Ready To Spend Billions To Bring Whole World Online

Facebook Inc (FB.O) is prepared to spend billions of dollars to reach its goal of bringing the Internet to everyone on the planet, Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg said on Friday.

"What we really care about is connecting everyone in the world," Zuckerberg said at an event in Mexico City hosted by Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim.

"Even if it means that Facebook has to spend billions of dollars over the next decade making this happen, I believe that over the long term its gonna be a good thing for us and for the world."

Around 3 billion people will have access to the Internet by the end of 2014, according to International Telecommunications Union (ITU) statistics. Almost half that, 1.3 billion people, use Facebook.

Facebook, the world’s largest social networking company, launched its Internet.org project last year to connect billions of people without Internet access in places such as Africa and Asia by working with phone operators.

"I believe that ... when everyone is on the Internet all of our businesses and economies will be better," Zuckerberg said.

Windows XP Is Enjoying A Very Strong Life After Death

When Windows 8 launched in 2012, Microsoft struggled to convince users that they should make the switch. The new UI was unfamiliar and unresponsive, the critical reaction was skeptical at best and most importantly, there wasn t really anything wrong with Windows 7. In fact, two years later, Windows 7 still has an enormous lead over Windows 8, but with the latest software update, Microsoft has finally started turning users around on the new OS.

According to the latest data from StatCounter, Windows 8.1 became the fourth most popular operating system over Windows 8 in August with a 7.46% market share. OS X barely topped out Windows 8.1 with 7.82%, but perhaps unsurprisingly, both were beat out by an OS which was officially retired back in April: Windows XP.

Despite a massive decline since last August, Windows XP still retained a 12.92% share of the global market last month. At this rate, it s going to be a race to see if Windows 8.1 can overtake the dead OS before Windows 9 hits the market within the next few months.

According to Russian hacker group WZOR, Microsoft is planning to introduce a substantial upgrade offer for Windows XP users when Windows 9 comes out in an attempt to lure them away from an operating system which is now more vulnerable than ever to malicious attacks. If Windows 9 is as feature-rich as the leaks have suggested, it might finally be enough to

bury Windows XP once and for all.

Now Microsoft just has to figure out how to convince the 50.31% share of Windows 7 users around the world to upgrade

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